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LYRICS OF LOVE

H·R·R·HERTZBERG



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LYRICS OF LOVE



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By

H. R. R. HERTZBERG



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DEDICATION

To no *one* soul be made the gift hereof:

I dedicate the book to all who love.

THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

Many of the verses included in this collection of Love-Lyrics have appeared in various papers, notably the "Harlequin," the "Times-Democrat," the "Item," of New Orleans, and the "Evening Journal" of New York. In these publications the author conducted daily columns. Yet, the love-songs were not ground out, mechanically. They were penned *con amore*, and are therefore presented to the book-reading public without hesitation of the apologetic sort.

THE AUTHOR

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A BIT OF A LOVE SONG.

A bit of a love song, a wee little bit,
To hold in your heart for the gladness of it,
To stick in your mind (as a bud in your coat),
To hum, without audible sound, in your throat!

A bit of a love song, tho' tenderly still,
'Tis heard, let the city rage on as it will.
The rumble of trains and the shouts of the throng
Can't hush it, this wee little bit of a song!

A bit of a love song you'll find, if you test,
The music by which you'll be marching your best.
To aid you to conquer in battles of life,
A bit of a love song beats trumpet and fife!

THE CASTLED PLACE IN HAPPYSHIRE.

Come with me to my broad estates,
My castled place in Happyshire.
(The county's mine). An hundred gates
Ope on an hundred roadways clear.

No mortgage lies on land or hall.
Indeed, I draw good rents therefrom:
Ten thousand pounds' worth, all in all,
Of proud and pleasant fancies. Come!

The name of it is Tarrytrust,
Faith, Hope, and Cheer together laid
It out, bade lawns spring up where dust
Was erewhile desolate, and made

A park (there game abounds), and built
The manse, whose turrets please me wel'
And caused a brook to laugh and lilt
Its way across the clover-dell.

My tenants all are goodly folk,
True yeomen of a sturdy breed;
Their banner is my 'broidered cloak,
And mine opinion is their creed.

Within the castle hall there is
A room particularly fine:
Rosewood, and golden fleurdelys,
And velvets of the Florentine.

'Twas planned so for the Chatelaine,
The lady white and heaven-eyed,
Who there with me shall bide and reign—
And still it is unoccupied.

I wonder would you, Beauty, care
To lend the room the final grace?
I wonder would you, Wondrous-fair,
Come with me to the castled place?

They think I'm just a scribbler, just
A nameless penny-poet here.

* * * * *

But I'm the Lord of Tarrytrust,
A broad estate in Happyshire!

THE LOVERS' CREDO.

No new joys can Eden show,
No new horrors offer Hell us:
First, because we love, and oh,
Secondly, because we're jealous.

THE WORLD'S CHROMATICS.

The world is blue:

A sorry blue of discontent, not heaven's placid
hue.

The world is red:

Blood-red with war and violence—behold the
mangled Dead.

The world is black:

Injustice, foul intolerance, have sabled it, alack.

The world is white:

Immaculately white, I swear! My Lady-love's
in sight!



THE EFFECT OF THAT LIKENESS.

My heart was a locket of brass.

Your likeness was placed in it. Then

A miracle, dear, came to pass.

That heart is of gold now, I ken!

AN EARLY VIEW.

Man is the rhythm, and woman the rhyme,
Weaving together the poem of Time,
Life's ever-continuing ode.

He clears of briars and shows her the way,
Leads her and guides her thro' night and thro'
day—

While she strews with roses the road.

He seeks the measure, suiting the thought,
—Labor with laurel and thorn crowns fraught—
Leaving it polished and terse.

Hers is to follow, to watch, and to near
With a smile and a kiss, and a heartload of cheer,
For rhyme at the end of each verse!

And when thus the measure's attuned by the
rhyme,
(As wedding is blest by the churchbells' chime)
Then life is a poem of gold—

But often the rhythm fails ever to hail
Its musical mate, thro' the length of the tale—

* * * * *

And blank verse is prosy and cold.

LOVE'S ORCHESTRA.

The lover said: "Whenas I look on you
O Beauty, comes a-surging to my heart
A wish my voice could be an orchestra.

Because no words I know seem quick and true
Enough to tell (nay, not the littlest part!)
My love, my gladness, and my holy awe.

'Tis Music might express it, I believe.
—Of course, there is no need of mawkish flute,
Or of the trombone's gross unmeaning roar—

But these the other instruments (to weave
A perfect cloth-of-gold in sounds, to suit
Each variation of my theme, to pour

Together all my soul within your ear)
I fain would have in readiness at hand,
Entirely new and faultlessly attuned:

The clarinet should render, softly clear,
A tenderness (you'll never understand
How great it is) no voice hath ever crooned.

Of lofty passion then the violin
Should, at its highest vibrancy, declare
The proud confession, dwelling on it long!

Thereafter should the 'cello straight begin,
By the bass-viol seconded, an air
Of trustfulness exceeding deep and strong.

The harp should have a solo, just to tell
Of the devout, the myrrhal reverence
My spirit sends, a tribute, to your feet.

Next, flageolets should say a few things—well,
Faint, fugitive caress-notes, fleeting hence
As swiftly as they came, yet very sweet.

And, following for contrast, should the horn,
The fife, the triangle, the cymbals, too,
Shout, pipe and tinkle out the joys thereof!

For a finale, should at once be borne
To you by all the organs of the crew
The glorious ensemble of my love!"

THE BELLS OF VINETA.

Vineta, they called it,
The town which the sea
Engulfed of a sudden—
No warning gave she.

The sailors who've sailed where
Vineta was sunk,
Protest by the saints that
No drop had they drunk

When—clearly they heard them!—
The bells of the town
Went pealing for vespers
A thousand feet down.

Their tale I believe it,
Because on this day
Deep, deep in the sea of
My heart, ring away

The chimes of a love that
Was buried there—of
A time when I thought one
Could bury one's love.

THE POEM SUPREME.

O my sweet,
There is naught in any rhythm like the rhythm
of your feet!

Ne'er a wise
Poet found a rhyme to rhyme as rhyme your eyes
unto the skies!

COUNTING THE STARS.

"What are you doing there, my son?

What are you doing there?"

"I'm counting, father, one by one,

The stars that glisten fair."

"And tell me, youngster, star for star,

How many do you find?"

"I find, good father, two that are

Most wondrous to my mind."

"You have a name for these, of course,

These two that you prefer."

"The first is Power, Might, or Force—

The second Glory, sir."

"Your eyes are keen, my lad, and yet,

Look yonder—higher! See?"

"O father, tho' the sun has set,

That star's as bright as he!"

"Ay, 'tis the best, by God's intent,

Of Nature's starry drove.

Without that star no firmament:

It is the star of Love."

EYE TO EYE.

Eye to eye,
That's the only way for love to live and know
the reason how and why.
Pen and paper, style and phrases—powerless
they flutter by!

She may write:
"You are very silly to be jealous—oh, unconscion-
able quite—
Do you love a creature whom you can not trust
beyond your sight?"

He may swear:
"Really, you treat me in a manner that is any-
thing but fair,
Never yet my faith has failed you (which so
carelessly you wear)."

But withal
Neither will believe the other firmly, and the
house of love must fall,
Crumble into dust and splinters, tower, hearth-
place, porch, and hall!

Eye to eye,
That's the only way for love to live and know the
reason—how and why.
Pen and paper, style and phrases—powerless they
flutter by!

THEIR PROPER PLACE.

Hark ye, my wise astronomers
Who, truly, aren't wise at all!
I wager that you do not know
What I, a layman, ken so well:
Two stars are missing from the skies!

The brightest ever twinkled, sirs!
How did they come to fade or fall?
And how came I to find them? O
They never faded—never fell—

I found them in My Lady's eyes!

ALIVE AT LAST.

The vague desire for glory which
The child feels, first of all, when speeds
Into the circus ring a chap
In gold on three Arabian steeds,

Which, later on, the youngster—say,
Of twenty—nurses in his breast,
The while he reads of d'Artagnan
And other heroes at their best,

And which, at thirty, bids the man
Thrill at the thought of leading men

By force of eloquence and will,
By subtle work of mind and pen,

No longer in my soul it dwells.
Am I to all ambition dead,
Or splendidly alive at last,
I, who believe in love instead?

THE REASON.

'At last I've found the reason
For living, which I sought
By means of thought and Science—
The two availed me naught.

Both Thought and Science couldn't
That reason show me, tho'
They tried, I'm sure, their utmost
For twenty years or so!"

(He was a learned fellow,
A deep philosopher,
Who spoke, his eyes a-glowing,
His pulses all astir.)

"But now I know the reason:
'Tis love, the true and good!
*Tho' Science couldn't teach me,
The little woman could!"*

LOVE'S VICTORY.

I wonder at the pettiness
That somehow still attempts to mar
Our sweetest joyance and, egad,
Our biggest feeling, as a gnat
May try to tease an elephant—

A pettiness that says: "Express
Thy joyance not, since near and far
Less happy ones may jeer, my lad.
Ashamed of happiness? Not that
You need be—only, sing you shan't."

'T has been the fashion among men
To prove thus petty. Me, me too
(Albeit I'm happy sunwise and
Each moment is an age of bliss)
Doth now the pettiness assail.

It bids me keep the silence when
My soul advises: "Voice me, you!"
It argues: "Friend, you understand,
To fitly hymn your rapture, this
Appears impossible! You'll fail."

The argument is just, perchance,
Nay, surely, since the tongue that gods
Use to incorporate, above,
Their thoughts divinest and the beats
Most godly of their purple blood,

Would not suffice to tell the trance
Has placed me high beyond the frauds

And fears of man, to sound the love
Before which ev'ry doubt retreats—
(Cage in a bowl of glass the flood!)

And yet, that argument it is
Sheer sophistry, mere stammering
Of stupid, vulgar vanitie!
Bah! In this holy hour I'll not
Let pettiness prevail—not I!

In truth my silence were, I wis,
But cowardice, a sickly thing.
Come, little boy-men, jeer at me:
Ecstatic gladness is my lot
Through Her, my Love, who smiles anigh

MADemoISELLE.

Mademoiselle—
I like the word exceeding well
Altho' 'tis over long to be
Applied to one as wondrous wee
(The littlest lady-elf!) as she,
Mademoiselle!

Mademoiselle:
According to what sages tell,
A man may on this earth possess
Only a little happiness.
My share I can not have, unless—
Mademoiselle?

THE SECRET MESSAGE.

Fleeter than blooded
Steeds of the Arabs
Chippaway arrows,
Or angels of God,

Travels the secret
Message a lover
Sends from his soul to
His lady abroad.

Haven't you seen a
Girl, who was talking
Commonplace to you,
Hush, quickly, and blush?

Well, rest assured that
Just such a message
Came to her like the
Note of a thrush!

THE READY CHOICE.

How you prattle of crowns and of masters'
degrees,

Of wealth, and of power and fame as a prize!
For you ev'ry one of them all, if you please—
For me, but the look in my ladylove's eyes!

THE PRICE OF LIVING.

True, men have died for just a woman's glance.
A smile, a word, the promise of a dance,

A kiss, as light as any snowflake's fall,
On almond-scented fingers, that was all.

But more than these My Lady fair must give,
To him who would not die for her, but live!

O, death comes easy, far more easy than
Fine, faithful, steady service comes to man.

I'll gladly serve you, Lady, serve you fair—
If you will drop your self-sufficient air,

And tender me, with all the sweets thereof,
Your lips—the countless riches of your love!

A WOMAN'S SMILE.

I like to think

That ev'rything most beautiful—in ink,
Or marble, or else colours made immortal,
That all the noble deeds of any sort, all
The true gifts to humanity, the true
Proud acts of thanks to nature, have been due
To one cause only, one cause all the while:

A woman's smile.

THE SILLY OLD LETTERS.

Of course, they're exceedingly silly,
(Both feeling and wording thereof)—
These letters that end in: "Your Billy"—
Begin with: "My Beautiful Love."

They'll never be literature, truly—
Egad, but the style of 'em's fierce!—
Yet, somehow, my heart beats unduly
In spite of my seventy years.

Who was this particular charmer—
Old man, why this posing aloof?
You know, well you know, that the armour
Of Time against her is not proof.

You loved her—you never did better.
You lost her—you never did worse,
The best you can do is regret her,
With blessings, instead of a curse.

She jilted you? That's what the end meant?
It seems to me you were the knave.
You gave her no grain of amendment
For all the forgiveness she gave.

Ah, well—forty years 'tis (and over)
Ago, since we parted for good—
(For ill, says my heart) yet her lover
I'm now as I was when I stood

For letters exceedingly silly
(Both feeling and wording thereof)
That ended in: "Ever Your Billy"—
Began with: "My Beautiful Love."

THE WINDOW.

Whoso has had a compound fracture of
The leg (which means that both the bones therein
Were broken till they pierced the outer flesh
And made a gaping wound there) surely knows
The proper treatment doth consist of this:
That, first, the limb in plaster should be clad
At a physician's hands, the plaster case
To fit without a wrinkle, very tight;
That also, at the same time, should be cut
Away the plaster where the wound appears.
Thus is obtained a *window* for the wound.
Your surgeons call it so. The use of it?
Why, simply, that without disturbance of
The injured leg's position, may the wound
Be, through this window-opening, all drained
And dressed each day, when the physician comes,
Until, by force of cleansing drugs, the flesh
Is rendered clean—by force of balsam's aid
Made healthy—and the wound consents to heal.

Such is the window's use, that window which
Goes with a compound fracture of the leg.

* * * * *

You have a compound fracture of the soul?
Well, then, good fellow, see to it at once
The soul be wrapt in plaster of resolve
(Protecting it against all outer chance),
But let a window in that plaster show,

Through which the soul's wound may be neatly
dressed ;
Through which the evil humors, and the bad
Blood that would, were they left alone, retard
The healing of your soul, may be each day
Extracted—balsam put into their place
To soothe at first, then take away the pain—
By a physician's sure and skillful hand.

Who should be your physician? Good my friend,
You may not care for women-doctors, but
To treat a fracture of the soul meseems
The best physician is a woman, fair
And gentle, pretty, loving, holding a
Diploma from the School of Nature in
The sciences of Tenderness and Truth.

AN EASY ANSWER.

Why are my letters cold, you ask,
And why my love is wanting there?

The answer proves an easy task—
Because I'm not a millionaire.

Were I to place my love of you
In envelope, on paper here :

'Twould weigh so much, I tell you true,
I could not pay the postage, dear !

THE SUDDEN CHANGE.

He couldn't feel the sunshine,
He couldn't see the sky
Wherein, like lambs a-frolic,
Small clouds were trooping by.

The greetings, which the flowers
Sent over hedge and wall,
Received no recognition—
They reached him not at all.

A group of pretty children,
Engaged in dainty play,
He didn't even notice
Before he turned away.

Two dogs of finest breeding
Raced past him in the street,
Slim grayhounds of the kind that
Is as a slander fleet.

He gave them no attention,
A listless glance beyond:
Altho' of dogs and children
He was exceeding fond.

Her gala clothes wore Nature,
Her regal gold-and-greens.
For all he knew she might be
In torn and rusty jeans,

As, at the corner standing,
Upon his brow a frown,
He looked up at the clock and
Then looked the street a-down.

But, all at once, the sunshine
He felt, the sky he saw,
The flowers' fragrance found him,
And hurried through the haw—

The children's happy laughter
Within him echoes had,
The golden greens of Nature
His eyes made very glad.

His heart sang loud within him:
"Behold the glorious day!"
* * * * *

The long-expected maiden
At last was on the way!

THE WAY AND THE BRIDGE.

Five thousand miles there are
Of land alone, they say.
That's far, exceeding far,
But friendship knows the way.

Ten thousand miles there are
Of sea between us twain.
That's far, exceeding far,
But love has bridged the main.

PREPARATION.

Imps, and gnomes, and elfir,
Little spirits who
Dwell mine inner self in,
Come, ye busy crew!
Fetch your brooms and brushes,
Crystal water, too,
Silver sands and rushes!
Here's a task for you.

Straight to my neglected
Heart-room make your way,
For I have directed
That it shall to-day
Have a thorough cleaning,
So 'tis bright and gay—
Never mind the meaning!
Do ye what I say.

Yes, the room is dusty—
Grimy, too, I fear.
Air it, that the musty
Smell may disappear.
All the stuff you find—oh,
Pictures, too, you hear?
Throw them out of window
Till the place be clear!

Scrubbed and sweet, and scented?
Just as ye were told?
Let the room be tented:
Crimson samite, bold—
So that ev'ry merry
Sunbeam it may hold.
Have a stool set very
Near a throne of gold.

Scatter rushes over
Sand upon the floor:
Meadow blooms and clover
Blossoms furthermore!
Tell me: "Task is ended!"
Then—and not before—
Will I lead my Splendid
Lady through the door.

TOO SMALL.

"You've raved about your lady's sweet
Wide eyes, her flowing hair," the lout
Said to the poet, "but her feet
And hands you've left completely out!"
Swift came the poet's answer neat:
"They are too small to rave about!"

THE TWO HALF-HOURS.

Nay, I'm not fond of solitude—
A little of it, tho', is good.

For two half-hours each day, I own,
I like to be left all alone.

The first of these? Just ere I greet
My lady fair, and pure, and sweet.

This much of time I need, you see,
To cleanse the heart and head of me,

To banish for the nonce therefrom
All bitterness that may have come

Within their precincts—to prepare
Them for the glory nearing there!

* * * * *

The other thirty minutes? Why,
Just after she has gone, say I!

To recollect each word—rejoice
In lingering echoes of her voice—

To gather from the friendly air
The subtle fragrance of her hair—

To picture, smiling from the skies,
The twofold miracle, her eyes—

Then, very tenderly to press
On fancied lips a last caress—

To close the sanctuary's door,
And step into the world once more.

CUPID HATH A RIFLE NOW.

Cupid hath a rifle now.
"For my bow," he thought, "and arrows
Aren't fit to shoot at sparrows!"
Cupid hath a rifle now.

Arrows stuck within the heart.
That's why Love was an abiding
Guest who liked his place of hiding.
Arrows stuck within the heart.

Rifle balls go in and out.
That's why Love—ay, maid's and man's—it
Is a thing of rapid transit!
Rifle balls go in and out.

THE ASPIRATION.

My thoughts shall be your pages, O my Queen,
To fetch you flowers, ferns, and graceful
grasses
From meadows, forests, mountains, dales, and
passes,
And crown therewith your royal brow serene.

My deeds shall be your silver-bucklered squires,
Your escort armed alike with wit and weapon,
To see that, foot for foot, the ground you
step on
Prove safe and even. Thus my heart aspires.

TRIUMPHANT DEFEAT.

[A poet who had just realized that he's not a genius is sitting in his study, gloomy, despairful. His eyes happen to fall on a bust of Shakespeare heavily covered with dust. Then he sees that the sun is shining very gladly, very generously, outside. And he writes:]

My funeral! The day thereof has come
'Tis not a glorious funeral, at that.
No martial music and no beat of drum—
The ceremony's rather dull and flat.
At any rate this morn I bury me:
A *me* I've cherished many hopeful years,
A *me* of greatness due to poesie—
Good-bye, my poet-ego! Yet no tears
Are in mine eyes or in my heart altho'
My dreams o' flaming fame for aye have fled,
Altho' that I'm a common lout I know,
Instead of him (the poet!) who is dead.
O yes, my soul was aching in the dark
This little while ago, and in my heart
Glowed not a single e'er so tiny spark
Of joyance, and I thought my proper part
Called for an exit from the stage of life.
"Since mine ambition's dead, let body die!
Why be a combatant in petty strife
When battle-royal's lost?" I queried. "Why?"
That was a minor-poet view, egad,
A melodrama-finish which appealed

Unto my wounded vanity, and had
Perchance been carried out (for men will yield
To Vanity's advice more easily
Than to the bidding of a noble Pride)
But for the silent voice o' Fate which: "See!"
Exclaimed unto my spirit, "let them guide,
Your eyes, to yonder corner, to the shelf
Above the bookshrine, ay, this instant, now!"
The silent voice o' Fate obeyed myself
Nor asked the "why" since given was the
"how."

Upon the shelf there stood a little bust
Of Billy Shakespeare (flippancy? Ah, no,
Familiar love!) and on the bust lay dust
Extremely thick—how dust will grow and
grow!

It settles, 'stead of growing, is your gibe,
Good Master Pedant? Very well, have it
Your way. But still, defiance to your tribe!
Dust seems to grow and "grow" 's the word
that's fit.

And then was born within my mind the thought:
E'en as upon his image there is dust,
The works, the works of him who wonders
wrought

With grey oblivion's dust Time shall and must
Entomb at last and Fame's "forever" is
A brief hour after all, and "glory" means

Not much except a fleeting melody's
Caress, less real than a mess of beans.
And then I marked the sun: 'twas coming in
Great, glad, and generous. I glanced around
Out of the window. Nature, free from sin,
All-beautiful, and all-alive I found.
Yon stretch of lawn—a woman walking there
In gown of white. Her feet are white upon
The grasses' green. And in her crowny hair
Still, still are sunrays, tho' the shade has won.
Hail, sun, and life, and love, they are at hand!
I leave you, dead ambition, to your must!
Into the open where the sun is! And—
Upon the bust of Shakespeare there is dust.

THE VOLUME DURABLE.

The leaves on which the story of our love
Was written (as it happened, day for day
At first, then week for week, and later on
Just now and then, until you went away)
I found this morning, o, a stack thereof!
The dust of years had turned their white to
gray.
But when that dust, by dint of work, was gone,
Before me all complete the story lay.
To bind the leaves, and properly, I strove
Into a volume durable for aye,
Which I shall read whene'er my tasks are done,
In holy silence, as the pious pray.

A BOWER OF THOUGHT.

Her thoughts are like roses
 I know,
Like roses as white as
 The snow:
The snow of a day
Intended for May,
Made gay by the sunlight a-shower.

Whenever I see her
 There comes
Her fragrance upon me—
 There hums
My heart, as a bee
Goes humming for glee
At sight of its favorite flower.

The while I am with her,
 I play
At plucking these thoughts, and
 Away
I take them when I
Have told her good-bye—
And now, sirs, I live in a bower!

IF.

Oh, if words could turn to roses,
 Violets, and other flowers—
Ever should my voice be building
 For my lady blooming bowers!

AS THEY LIKE THEM.

Rose, Rose
Has asked for one of those
Fragile,
Agile,
Tinkling little things:
(The humming-birds of poetry with bells along
their wings!)

May
To undiluted sentiment has always been inimical:
"Pray,
My song make semi-passionate," she said, "and
semi-cynical!"

Gentle little Jane,
She likes the sort of verses that are full of pleasant pain,
That thrill with hints unspoken
Of hearts not wholly broken,
And offer glinty glimpses of the sun beyond the
rain!

Righteous and resolute is Ruth:
"Let your lines be ringing with the resonance of
truth!
In a lay of love,
For the key thereof,
Rather than the note o' frenzied feeling, sir, you
must
Sound the finer one of honour, and of honourable
trust!"

Brownie Bess

Softly pleads for tenderness:
Calls for poems (like caresses
Which a shy young lover presses
Timidly on shyer maiden's trembling, slender
hand and arm)
Reverential, soft, and warm.

Eulalie,
Very white and very haughty, it is she
Who demands (in stately meter,
And with rhymes devised to greet her
Chapel-chimewise) solemn hymns
To her beauty and her whims.

Last announces Grace:
"If you sing for me, there needn't be of skillful
work a trace:
Not art,
But heart
Should the poet's pen guide surely when for love
it runs its race!"

TRUE LOVE.

The manly man who's set his face
And soul alike against all wrong,
All weakness, all dishonour, strong
Tho' then he be, must, would he feel
Life's real truth and glory, kneel
To woman for the final grace.

THE DECENT THING.

When Love has been so gracious
To call on you, my son,
And, after quite a visit, has
Concluded to move on,

The proper thing is not to try
And force it to remain:
It is to smile a gay good-bye,
And bid it come again.

STRONG ENOUGH

"A little bit
Of womanhood!
A plaything fit
For tender mood!
A statuette
Exceeding frail!
A thing to pet,
Of no avail
(Not strong enough!)
In real life,
Since life is rough!"
Thus runneth, rife
And wise, I wis,
Your judgment of
The maid who is
My wondrous Love.

I will agree
In this with you:
No giant she,
That's truly true.
A little bit
Of womanhood!
Yet—be it writ
And understood—
She's very strong,
So strong that all
My hopes (a throng!)
Sans fear o' fall
May lean on her—
So strong she can
Bear nobly, sir,
The faith of man.

THE RETORT LOGICAL.

You say I am a flatterer—
A mountebank in phrases—
And that more faith-compelling were—
If rarer too—my praises?

The lark who to each morning sun
His hymn of worship raises—
The nightingale whose sonnets run
While on the moon he gazes—

One is the night's true lover, know—
The other one the day's is—
And I am ever yours, and so
My song of you always is!

THE LOVER'S FAILURE TO AGREE.

Not beautiful?—You may be right.
Indeed it seems to me her face
Hath not the Grecian angle quite,
Her form not quite the Grecian grace.
Not beautiful?—You may be right.

Not witty?—Well, perhaps you are
Correct in this your judgment, wise.
She doesn't, like an even-star,
Shine out in conversation-skies.
Not witty?—Wise, perhaps, you are.

Not wealthy?—True again, my friend,
If anything be truly true.
She does not draw a dividend
Of many thousands as her due.
Not wealthy?—True, my learned friend.

And yet, you are mistaken, sir!
O, ignoramus of the worst!
Each sentence you have passed on her
Is hasty, groundless, base, from first
To last! You are mistaken, sir!

She's beautiful, this Love of mine,
(Confound the Grecian-angle rot!)
Whenever, in her eyes, divine
Appears her gentle soul. Sneer not!
She's beautiful, this Love of mine.

By all the gods, she's witty. She
Diverts me ever, me who am
Bored unto death by others, me

Who balk at verse and epigram!
By all the gods, she's witty, she!
And, finally, she's wealthy. Ay,
A mint her heart is, issuing,
Day follow day, a big supply
Of golden thoughts and deeds. The thing
Is very clear. She's wealthy, ay.
Beg pardon, liar, on your knees,
Or you shall flounder in the ditch!
Repeat the words I'm saying: *She's*
Most witty, beautiful, and rich!
* * * * *
That's proper. Rise, and dust your knees.

THE HEART, THE REASON AND THE FEET

The heart said: "You love her!"
The reason said: "Nay!"
The heart said: "Go seek her!"
The reason said: "Stay!"

The heart and the reason
Thus quarreled all day,
Then went into slumber,
Fatigued from the fray.

The feet of the heart are
The vassals, for they
Are now to the maid's house
A-finding the way.

THE SMILE

At last had come the smile my heart loves best
To poise itself about your lips, and there
It swayed, much as a butterfly (of those
Whose wings are more diaphanous than air)
Resting a little space upon a rose.
So smiles a child by tender dreams caressed.

As Raphael viewed the Madonna, who
Had glided to his canvas from his soul,
And wondered, proudly, gladly awestruck, at
The gift that bade him Heaven's wealth unroll
Unto men's eyes, thus very still I sat
And said white prayers in my heart to you.

For once the master-painter's pride I knew,
The glory-glow of genius, since the brush
That wrought your smile was just a word of
mine,
A word tipped right with colour true and lush,
Which somehow, more through fortune than design,
Had placed that colour absolutely true.

Ah, but my work is perishable! If
Myself could only keep the smile alive,
Hold, as it is, the love it heralds, I
Would never for a further splendor strive.
Wherefore, with all the voice of me, I cry:
"O Lord of painters, lend thy fixatif!"

THE TENDERNESS.

I.

The tenderness one has for little girls:
Little girls grown, who still reveal the frail
Sweet helplessness of childhood all the while.
Whose dresses you call frocks, whose coiffures
curls.

For whom you tremble when their cheeks are
pale.

Whom you imagine always clad in blue.

Whom you would carry, gently, mile for mile.

To whom you say, within the heart, and smile:

Bless *you*!

II.

The tenderness one has for woman, fine,
Tall, true, who looks you calmly in the soul,
Trusting, because of her own nobleness.

Not idol, ever, since she is divine.

Whose height is heightened by her aureole.

Whose eyes are mirrors of eternitie.

To whom you must tell *all* the truth, no less.

To whom you say, within the heart, confess:

Bless *me*!

THE HOPELESS DESIRE.

Once, they say, a mermaid
(Very fair was she)
Wi' the hair of her made
Seines to dredge the sea,

Caught a million fishes
And anemones,
But her wish of wishes
Did not yield the seas.

'Twasn't pearl or coral,
'Twasn't golden sand,
'Twasn't amber, for all
These came to her hand.

'Twas a little flower
Dreamt of, ne'er possessed,
In the idle hour
Of the sleepless rest.

And this bloom—alone it
Grew on earth above,
Where they've always known it
By the name of "Love."

A COMPLIMENT OF MEXICO.

Carmelita, what are tears
Doing in your pretty eyes?

Sangre santo! it appears
That it rains in Paradise!

THE UNFAIR WAGER.

Nightingale, it isn't fair:
Verily, you'll lose the wager.

You're a genius wondrous rare,
You're an old and practiced stager,

It is true. You have me there—
But—you're bound to lose the wager!
* * * * *

Let me state the case again:
We're to sing in competition,

And the vanquished of us twain
Shall have but a single mission

Ever after—near and far
To extol the winner's glory.

Moon and stars eleven are—
On the jury. That's the story.
* * * * *

Now, of course, I know that you
Always were the greater poet,

You, whose voice is as the dew
Clear, as flower sweet. I know it.

Did the contest's issue stand
Merely on the ground of merit,

Did the victory demand
Only skill and method, were it

Just a question of whose art
Was the highest, the entirest—

Doubtless I should act the part
Of your lifelong panegyrist.

* * * * *

But, you see the reason why
My success is all effected,

Is that for a subject I
Have my Lady-love selected!

Nothing more there is to do
Than to name her splendours over—

And the voice is very true
Of a truly-loving lover!

* * * * *

Then, besides—the jury will
(Keen thro' sense of justice, keener

Thro' a sense of beauty still)
Find for me: The Jury's seen her.

THROUGH THE SNOW.

Frosted white with snow-dust were
Furry toque and cape of her.
Like caresses, tender, soft,

Snowflakes, falling fast and oft,
Rested on her glossy hair,
Doing powder's duty there—
And a pair of dark-blue eyes,
Partly merry, partly wise,
Shone through lashes long and meek,
Each above a rosy cheek.
At her lips a little smile,
Gave a glimpse of pearls, the while.
Swiftly sped the twinkling sleigh
O'er the white and even way.
Pure as flowers sent below
By the angels came the snow.

Never had my heart ere this
Beat so high for Berenis.
Suddenly I knew that she
Was the one and all for me.
Wherefore, very brave and bold,
Then and there my love I told.
Red as sunshine as it dips
To the sea, she ope'd her lips
To reply, but ere she spoke,
Clanged a gong, and I—awoke.
All of it a dream! Yet—no—
Window sill was packed with snow.

Sure no idle dream it is
That I love fair Berenis.
Wonder what she would have said
Had the scene been real instead?
By the gods, I think I'll go
Now to ask her, through the snow.

UNAMBITIOUS.

No time have I for game and sport:
The hunt, or Isaac Walton's art,
Or Alpine climbing,—all the sort
Of pleasure that is work in part.

The only fishing that I do
Is for Her smiles. Each day I start
To bag a kindly word or two.

I try to climb into Her heart.
You will not meet me in the crowd
Which surges thro' the busy mart,
Where madmen, very hot and loud,
Bid for a seat in fortune's cart.

What are your stocks and spots beside
Her faintest glance? By Cupid's dart,
The bonds I would not be denied
Are found on no financial chart!

HER BEAUTIFUL WRINKLES.

Little woman, if you will,
Listen for a space.
Turn to me (so pretty still,
Silver-crowned!) your face.

Truly, wrinkles there are wrought,
Wrinkles not a few.
But wi' their engraving naught
Sorrow had to do.

Laughter caused them to appear—
Since you love to laugh!
Pleasure pure has written here
Oft its autograph.

Thus I deem your wrinkles fair,
Little wrinkled wife:
For the history is there
Of a happy life.

FAILURE.

He'd written: "'Tis a master I will be.
To shape the nation's destinies I come.
The flutes of pleasure shall not coo for me.
I will not dance along in silly glee,
But march by trumpet heralded and drum."

He'd written: "Love? I have no time to spare.
To poets and to dreamers let it fall!
What is a woman, be she fairy-fair,
That she should hold me on the high road there,
Delay me on my way to Glory's Hall?"

He'd written: "Sternly always I'll preserve
My self intact, unyielding. Who would rule
The world, must never sway and never swerve.
Of granite need my will be and my nerve,
As firm, as hard, as massive, and as cool."
* * * * *

He writes: "There is a baby on my knee.
There is the baby's mother at my side.
I failed of granite greatness, as you see,
I found I was a creature weak and wee—
Ashamed? That failure is my joyous pride."

TWO WAYS OF SAYING IT.

I. THE DEW AND THE SUNSHINE.

No flower, worthy of a drop of dew,
Goes quite without it, and no soul of man
Fails of the food it needeth—friendship true—
Throughout his life's or long or little span.

No flower ever lives entirely shunned
By sunshine, and no soul of man has e'er
Unfolded that at some time was not sunned
By love, and made exceeding clear and fair.

II. FLOWERS.

Wherever there's a bit of sod
On which a drop of rain may fall,
A sunbeam rest—the law of God
Will into life a flower call.

Wherever there's intelligence
Not lost entirely to the grace
Of honest feeling, Providence
Decrees that love shall dwell a space.

THE WORD.

His task his self had chosen. 'Twas to write
In words exceeding true, and few withal,
The import of the Everything and All.

'And to this purpose, ever in his sight,
He thought, and dreamt, and felt, day follow
day,
And watched, and hearkened, as he walked the
way.

He sought the flower and he found the thorn,
And sought the thorn to find the flower too—
The world's each gladness and each gloom he
knew.

Then (thirty years had run since he was born)
He stayed within his study till "The End"
Beneath some thirty thousand lines he'd penned.

The epic was divided, justly, in
Three cantos, wi' the length of each the same.
"Ambition," "Glory," "Love," their titles came.

Whereafter, as he did not care to win
Applause yet undeserved, he laid aside
The work to tread again the highways wide.

A decade past, he wrote the work all o'er,
Made it a thousand lines—in cantos two,
Crossed out Ambition's canto through and
through.

Again, he was unsatisfied—once more
Went on the pilgrimage to wisdom white,
And learned so much he had no time to write—

So that when lastly the Pale Angel's call
Came to his ears, he could but trace a word,
One single word, while life within him stirred—

And yet his subject—Everything and All—
He solved and full described the whole thereof:
Because the single word he wrote was "Love."

A LUTE-THING.

The heart is a lute-thing, according to all
Those fellows whom poets we outsiders call,

A lute-thing with delicate song-ready strings:
If tipped by mood's finger a string be, it rings.

But more than a mood is should run o'er the lute
To draw from it music, (the sort a deaf-mute

May hear and rejoice with!) the music—no
less—
Of perfectly modulate heavenliness.

Ay, more than the fingertip touch of a mood
Is needed to sound us the pæan of Good.

Both hands must, both hands of our will, gentle-
strong,
Be kept at the heart-lute to bring out the song

Will gladden the One unto whom it is sent,
And glorify truly the heart-instrument.

Too many of fingertip artists there are:
No tinkling for me now! Both handed, I'll mar

This lute-thing entirely, I'll strain it and break—
Or else will I faultless love's melody make!

A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT.

Citizens all of my soul, o ye nobles, and warriors,
and guildmen,

Why did I bid you assemble at once in the forum to-day?

Answer me first: Are you clad in your togas of state, as I willed, men,

Holitime tunics, the whitest, and free from the dust o' the way?

* * * * *

Senators *Pride* and *Ambition*, remain at the head of the masses!

Pontifex *Friendship*, I beg that you stand at the right of these two!

Surely, whatever befall us, no power that may come to pass is

Able to narrow the space which of right, sir, belongeth to you—

Tolerance, lady superior, let not your modesty hide you!

Courage, my colonel of horse, I demand that you ride to the front.

Patience and *Industry*, burghers and craftsmen so firmly allied, you

Also I need by my side not to leave me again—as you're wont!

* * * * *

Out of the ranks, do you hear? O, you fellows, whose garments are sooty—

Doubt and *Suspicion* your names? You are banished from *this* land fore'er!

Guard, take the black villain yonder, and put him to death ('tis your duty),

Selfishness, always the evil adviser and heartless betray'r!

* * * * *

Now I will give you reply, and the reason for
all this reviewal:

Soul is no more a republic, but empire of
absolute sway.

Autocrat, Lord unrestrainable, Master of me and
of you—all—

Emperor *Love* has arrived and will reign for
a life and a day.

THE FOOL'S ADVICE.

O, lovers all, attention
For just a word or two!

A fool would like to mention
Some good advice to you—

The while a ladye giveth
Her smiling lips to yours—

(The while the seraph liveth
Within the House of Boors)—

Acknowledge condescension,
Acknowledge kiss and smile,

By absolute suspension
Of reasoning the while!

* * * * *

'Tis true that hardy metals
The test of doubt will bear,

But love's a bloom. Its petals
Are frail as well as fair.

* * * * *

You have a way of teasing
Yourself, good lovers, by

Swift adding to the pleasing
"She loves" the silly "why?"

"She loves me for my money"
You say, "or for my nerve—

She loves me for the honey
O' flattery I serve—

She loves me for the power
I may in time attain"—

And thus, you cause the flower
Of love to wilt and wane.

* * * * *

The doubts are out of season,
And all the "whys" thereof:

You shouldn't ask the reason—
For there is none in love.

—

KNOWLEDGE.

They say the aim and end of man
A steady search for knowledge is:
If he but know the woman's heart,
What matter all your "ologies?"

THE WATCH BY THE DOOR.

Death came to see me at my house, and rang,
The while myself was out. So it befell
That my Beloved, answering the bell
Ran to the door a-singing. (How she sang!)

And when the door stood open, even then
She did not recognize—so young, so gay,
So simple my Beloved—in this gray
Pale stranger the dread Leveller of men.

She bade him sit, on courtesy intent,
Within the study, and the space he sat.
His hand was rather cold—but what of that?—
When he arose to shake her hand, and went.

Conventional the phrases he let fall:
“Sorry I missed my friend—yet not in vain
My visit, since I met you. Call again?
Ay, soon—so tell your husband.” That was all.

But yesterday the call. Last night she died.
Mayhap because Death met her thus it was
That painlessly her soul departed, as
The souls of flowers from the petals glide.

In yonder room my white Beloved lies,
So that from here, my station by the door,
(The which, alive, will I forsake no more)
I may kiss all her body with mine eyes.

Here, by the door, the post where I remain
Until the bell shall sound a welcome tune.
I, I alone, must ope that door, when, soon,
To keep his promise, Death hath come again!

LA BRAVA.

You've doubtless seen La Brava, lion queen,
(Her name is May outside the circus glare),
In crimson cloak, and tights, and pride serene,
 Bid her maned fiends thro' fire-hoops leap,
 aflare?

She stands unarmed and fearless, tho' the fierce
 Four monsters—Nero, Satan, Darius, Khite—
Show, roaring, fangs, long, sharp enough to
 pierce
 The steelen armor of a giant knight.

She stands there unabashed, amid the stare
 Of thousands, night for night, and heeds them
 not.
No haughtier, no more indifferent air
 She could assume were she by king begot.

Yet when I told her of my love, a fawn
 Was ne'er so timid, to my heart's belief!
She pinkened like a little rose at dawn.
 She trembled like a little loosened leaf.

THE DREAMSHOP.

"I wish there were a dreamshop,"
 Said love-lorn Christopher.
"I'd spend—yes, all—my shekels
 In buying dreams of Her."

NEW LANGUAGE NEEDED.

"I wish there were a tongue," said she.

"A language very sweet and rich,
And musical, and fragrant-free,
And all expressive too, the which
Could none but lovers understand,
Which to the outer folk would be
Mere passing sound, just sing-song, and
Its meaning deepest mystery!

"Then you and I, my lover, we
Need never mind the presence of
Intruding bores. With keener glee,
In spite of them, we'd voice our love.
We'd tell each other, Dear, you know,
The things that are to you and me
Most worthy of a telling tho'
By Philistines surrounded. See?

"As matters stand, we both agree
Our love's too fine for stranger's ear.
But if that tongue existed, the
Fair secret still we'd keep it, Dear,
Ay, keep it still inviolate,
Yet lose no moment, e'er so wee,
Of lover-time! The call is great
For such a lovers' tongue," said she.

THE LOVER'S ARGUMENT.

You say, my Love, you trust me. Well
You may. You can. You shall. You must.
I know, at last, that I deserve,
At last, the tender gift of trust.

* * * * *

Had I been given by the king
(A king, yet—better far—a friend)
His chief crown-jewel, sans a flaw
And sans a price, to but the end
That I might hold and keep it safe,
Ay, guard it with my life, until
The day when once again to wear
It in his crown the king should will,
Then, surely, ne'er a robbers' den
(Tho', ere time, oft and oft I went!),
Ne'er more an evil roosting place
Of gallowbirds would I frequent.

I would not chance the jewel's loss.
I would not go where dwelleth Vice.
There'd be no jeopardizing of
The jewel without flaw and price.

* * * * *

I have been given by the Queen,
(A queen of mine election—you!)
Her chief crown-jewel, perfect love
Beyond all jewels rare and true.
'Tis mine in trust, 'tis mine as long
As I shall prove a guardian fair
And faithful, honour-clad and clean,
Thus fit the gem of gems to wear.

Then, surely, never will I tread
The dirty, crooked alleys which
Make up the Quarter of Deceit,
Wherein the mud is black as pitch.

And stickier, lest there I fall
And find, the morning of a night,
That in my fall was lost for aye
The Queen's crown-jewel, my delight.
* * * * *
Yes, Love of mine, trust! Trust me. Well
You may. You can. You shall. You must.
I know at last, that I deserve
To wear the jewel of thy trust.

DOLLIE DIMPLES.

You wish to know the reason why
I'd steal the rainbow from the sky?
To place it fair
Upon the hair
Of dainty Dollie Dimples!

And fain I'd use the silver stars
(The baby ones—not Jove or Mars)
As little dots,
Bright beauty spots,
For dainty Dollie Dimples!

When Peter ordered stairs of gold
In Paradise, he said, I'm told:
"I must have these
One day to please
The dainty Dollie Dimples!"

THE MISSION OF THE WORDS.

Were I the King of Words, I'd call them all
Together for a brilliant dress-parade,
A grand review, bid those depart at once
That showed an imperfection in their make,
Or else were coarse of colour, face, or gear.
Thereafter, also I would send away
Such words as were not flawlessly sincere,
And, wi' them, others on whose petals, wings,
Or polished surfaces appeared a trace
Of dust, or dirt, or wear, or weariness—
(You surely know that words are butterflies,
And flowers, jewels, flakes of snow, and birds?)
Then, lastly, of the rest I would dismiss,
Tho' graciously, whatever subjects mine
Were not entirely, wonderfully white.
* * * * * * * * *

And unto those remaining I would say:
* * * * * * * * *
"Rejoice. A noble mission shall be yours.
Hear my command, and speedily obey:
You are to wait upon my lady there:
(Her in whose hair the sun-rays lose themselves,
To sulk and hesitate when they are called

Back by their Master ready for the sea).
Attend me, while your service I explain.
You, who are butterflies, I do instruct
To flutter, hover gently in her sight—
That she may in your joyance frail delight.

Proud jewel words, milk-white, impeccable,
Your duty 'tis to pave the way of her
Continually, lest dust or mud defile.

Soft things like snowflakes, only nowise cold,
Fall, as she goes, upon her shoulders, thus
A-cloaking them in ermine ever-new.

My flower friends, spring up along the path
She treads, and turn the air she deigns to breathe
By tender homage rapturously sweet.

And you, O winged creatures, circle swift,
Unceasingly about her, singing soft:
Our king hath sent his whitest to his Queen!"

* * * * *

This would I do, were I the King of Words.

THE DAY.

Jeanne,

Jeanne,

You're dainty as the dawn—

Ay, sweet as early sunshine on a dew drop christened lawn.

June,

June,

You're splendid as the noon,

Agleam with gold, a-glittering from haughty crown to shoon.

Gwen,

Gwen,

You're sweet as gloaming (when

The sunbeams' last is saying to the first of stars
"god-en.")

May,

May,

You're more by far than they:

You're dawn, and noon, and gloaming! You're
my heart's triumphal day!

BECAUSE.

The ears o' Fate
Can bear to hear
The hiss of hate,
The howl o' fear,

The groan of pain,
The sob of shame,
The whine of vain
Regret that came

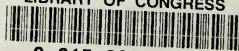
Too late, the cry
Of lonely woe,
Death's rattle, dry
And weirdly low,

The din of sin
And suffering
We're making in
This planet-thing—

*Because there comes
To them as well
The song that hums
My Lady Belle,*

*Because from time
To time, they hear
Her happy chime
Of laughter clear!*

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